The Black Cat

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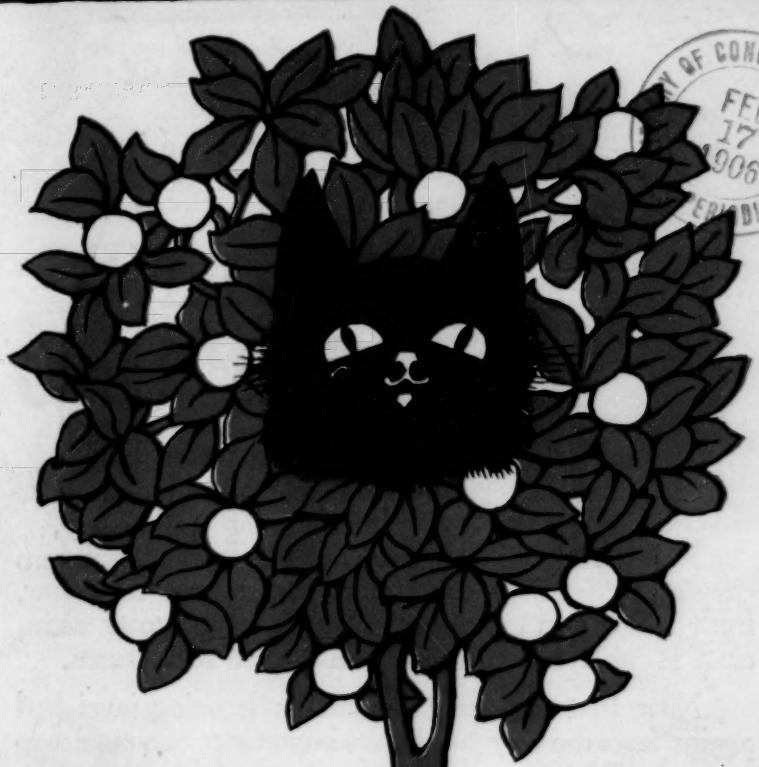

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A Nose for the King.
$350 Prize.
Jack London.

The Best Ten in the Valley.
A. W. North.

The Case of Burbanks vs. Nature.
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A Nose for the King.*

BY JACK LONDON.

IN the morning calm of Korea, when its peace and tranquillity truly merited its ancient name, "Cho-sen," there lived a politician by name Yi Chin Ho. He was a man of parts, and — who shall say? — perhaps in no wise worse than politicians the world over. But, unlike his brethren in other lands, Yi Chin Ho was in jail. Not that he had inadvertently diverted to himself public moneys, but that he had inadvertently diverted too much. Excess is to be deplored in all things, even in grafting, and Yi Chin Ho's excess had brought him to most deplorable straits.

Ten thousand strings of cash he owed the government, and he lay in prison under sentence of death. There was one advantage to the situation — he had plenty of time in which to think. And he thought well. Then called he the jailer to him.

"Most worthy man, you see before you one most wretched," he began. "Yet all will be well with me if you will but let me go free for one short hour this night. And all will be well with you, for I shall see to your advancement through the years, and

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you shall come at length to the directorship of all the prisons of Cho-sen."

"How, now?" demanded the jailer. "What foolishness is this? One short hour, and you but waiting for your head to be chopped off! And I, with an aged and much-to-be-respected mother, not to say anything of a wife and several children of tender years! Out upon you for the scoundrel that you are!"

"From the Sacred City to the ends of all the Eight Coasts there is no place for me to hide," Yi Chin Ho made reply. "I am a man of wisdom, but of what worth my wisdom here in prison? Were I free, well I know I could seek out and obtain the money wherewith to repay the government. I know of a nose that will save me from all my difficulties."

"A nose!" cried the jailer.

"A nose," said Yi Chin Ho. "A remarkable nose, if I may say so, a most remarkable nose."

The jailer threw up his hands despairingly. "Ah, what a wag you are, what a wag," he laughed. "To think that that very admirable wit of yours must go the way of the chopping block!"

And so saying, he turned and went away. But in the end, being a man soft of head and heart, when the night was well along he permitted Yi Chin Ho to go.

Straight he went to the Governor, catching him alone and arousing him from his sleep.

"Yi Chin Ho, or I'm no Governor!" cried the Governor. "What do you here who should be in prison waiting on the chopping block?"

"I pray your excellency to listen to me," said Yi Chin Ho, squatting on his hams by the bedside and lighting his pipe from the fire-box. "A dead man is without value. It is true, I am as a dead man, without value to the government, to your excellency, or to myself. But if, so to say, your excellency were to give me my freedom——"

"Impossible!" cried the Governor. "Besides, you are condemned to death."

"Your excellency well knows that if I can repay the ten thousand strings of cash the government will pardon me," Yi Chin Ho went on. "So, as I say, if your excellency were to give me

my freedom for a few days, being a man of understanding I should then repay the government and be in position to be of service to your excellency. I should be in position to be of very great service to your excellency."

"Have you a plan whereby you hope to obtain this money?" asked the Governor.

"I have," said Yi Chin Ho.

"Then come with it to me tomorrow night; I would now sleep," said the Governor, taking up his snore where it had been interrupted.

On the following night, having again obtained leave of absence from the jailer, Yi Chin Ho presented himself at the Governor's bedside.

"Is it you, Yi Chin Ho?" asked the Governor. "And have you the plan?"

"It is I, your excellency," answered Yi Chin Ho, "and the plan is here."

"Speak," commanded the Governor.

"The plan is here," repeated Yi Chin Ho, "here in my hand."

The Governor sat up and opened his eyes. Yi Chin Ho proffered in his hand a sheet of paper. The Governor held it to the light.

"Nothing but a nose," said he.

"A bit pinched, so, and so, your excellency," said Yi Chin Ho.

"Yes, a bit pinched here and there, as you say," said the Governor.

"Withal it is an exceeding corpulent nose, thus, and so, all in one place, at the end," proceeded Yi Chin Ho. "Your excellency would seek far and wide and many a day for that nose and find it not."

"An unusual nose," admitted the Governor.

"There is a wart upon it," said Yi Chin Ho.

"A most unusual nose," said the Governor. "Never have I seen the like. But what do you with this nose, Yi Chin Ho?"

"I seek it whereby to repay the money to the government," said Yi Chin Ho. "I seek it to be of service to your excellency, and I seek it to save my own worthless head. Further, I seek your excellency's seal upon this picture of the nose."

And the Governor laughed and affixed the seal of state, and Yi Chin Ho departed. For a month and a day he traveled the King's Road which leads to the shore of the Eastern Sea; and there, one night, at the gate of the biggest mansion of a wealthy city he knocked loudly for admittance.

"None other than the master of the house will I see," said he fiercely to the frightened servants. "I travel upon the King's business."

Straightaway was he led to an inner room, where the master of the house was roused from his sleep and brought blinking before him.

"You are Pak Chung Chang, head man of this city," said Yi Chin Ho in tones that were all-accusing. "I am upon the King's business."

Pak Chung Chang trembled. Well he knew the King's business was ever a terrible business. His knees smote together and he near fell to the floor.

"The hour is late," he quavered. "Were it not well to——"

"The King's business never waits!" thundered Yi Chin Ho. "Come apart with me, and swiftly. I have an affair of moment to discuss with you."

"It is the King's affair," he added with even greater fierceness; so that Pak Chung Chang's silver pipe dropped from his nerveless fingers and clattered on the floor.

"Know then," said Yi Chin Ho, when they had gone apart, "that the King is troubled with an affliction, a very terrible affliction. In that he failed to cure, the Court physician has had nothing else than his head chopped off. From all the Eight Provinces have the physicians come to wait upon the King. Wise consultation have they held, and they have decided that for a remedy for the King's affliction nothing else is required than a nose, a certain kind of nose, a very peculiar certain kind of nose.

"Then by none other was I summoned than his excellency the prime minister himself. He put a paper into my hand. Upon this paper was the very peculiar kind of nose drawn by the physicians of the Eight Provinces, with the seal of state upon it.

"'Go,' said his excellency the prime minister. 'Seek out this nose, for the King's affliction is sore. And wheresoever you find

this nose upon the face of a man, strike it off forthright and bring it in all haste to the Court, for the King must be cured. Go, and come not back until your search is rewarded.'

"And so I departed upon my quest," said Yi Chin Ho. "I have sought out the remotest corners of the kingdom; I have traveled the Eight Highways, searched the Eight Provinces, and sailed the seas of the Eight Coasts. And here I am."

With a great flourish he drew a paper from his girdle, unrolled it with many snappings and cracklings, and thrust it before the face of Pak Chung Chang. Upon the paper was the picture of the nose.

Pak Chung Chang stared upon it with bulging eyes.

"Never have I beheld such a nose," he began.

"There is a wart upon it," said Yi Chin Ho.

"Never have I beheld——" Pak Chung Chang began again.

"Bring your father before me," Yi Chin Ho interrupted sternly.

"My ancient and very-much-to-be-respected ancestor sleeps," said Pak Chung Chang.

"Why dissemble?" demanded Yi Chin Ho. "You know it is your father's nose. Bring him before me that I may strike it off and be gone. Hurry, lest I make bad report of you."

"Mercy!" cried Pak Chung Chang, falling on his knees. "It is impossible! It is impossible! You cannot strike off my father's nose. He cannot go down without his nose to the grave. He will become a laughter and a byword, and all my days and nights will be filled with woe. O reflect! Report that you have seen no such nose in your travels. You, too, have a father."

Pak Chung Chang clasped Yi Chin Ho's knees and fell to weeping on his sandals.

"My heart softens strangely at your tears," said Yi Chin Ho. "I, too, know filial piety and regard. But——" He hesitated, then added, as though thinking aloud, "It is as much as my head is worth."

"How much is your head worth?" asked Pak Chung Chang in a thin, small voice.

"A not remarkable head," said Yi Chin Ho. "An absurdly unremarkable head; but, such is my great foolishness, I value it at nothing less than one hundred thousand strings of cash."

"So be it," said Pak Chung Chang, rising to his feet.

"I shall need horses to carry the treasure," said Yi Chin Ho, "and men to guard it well as I journey through the mountains. There are robbers abroad in the land."

"There are robbers abroad in the land," said Pak Chung Chang sadly. "But it shall be as you wish, so long as my ancient and very-much-to-be-respected ancestor's nose abide in its appointed place."

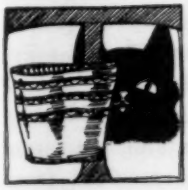
"Say nothing to any man of this occurrence," said Yi Chin Ho, "else will other and more loyal servants than I be sent to strike off your father's nose."

And so Yi Chin Ho departed on his way through the mountains, blithe of heart and gay of song as he listened to the jingling bells of his treasure-laden ponies.

There is little more to tell. Yi Chin Ho prospered through the years. By his efforts the jailer attained at length to the directorship of all the prisons of Cho-sen; the Governor ultimately betook himself to the Sacred City to be prime minister to the King, while Yi Chin Ho became the King's boon companion and sat at table with him to the end of a round, fat life. But Pak Chung Chang fell into a melancholy, and ever after he shook his head sadly, with tears in his eyes, whenever he regarded the expensive nose of his ancient and very-much-to-be-respected ancestor.

The Best Ten in the Valley.*

BY A. W. NORTH.



TYLER EDWARDS was born in a corner of Connecticut where the flavor of the salt air early called him seaward, and the abundance of the never-failing crop of stones impressed him with a flinty prospect of farm-life. In his fourteenth winter a wondrous frost gave fair promise of many new-born stones to be cared for in the coming birds-nesting season, and bitterly conscious of his ability at fence-making, he gratefully shipped as cabin-boy on a short-handed schooner bound for Florida.

On shipboard he accentuated his knowledge of cooking and furnished additional testimony to the long-established principle that a coast-born son of Connecticut is a sailor-man long before a razor need be placed in his kit; and in Florida he lost all doubts as to the possibility of the existence of a land where the rare exception of frosty winters might prove the non-existence of frost. Florida appealed to him, but the sea called louder, and for twenty years he followed the uncertain fortunes of those who live by bells and travel by the compass; then, in a storm off the Pacific Coast, his ship went down, and with two of the crew, and "Chink," the ship's monkey, he found himself, battered and bruised, on the high sands of Cape Mendocino, a party of campers industriously chafing his wounds and plaguing the monkey.

Recovering quickly, and provoked at the sea which had so inconsiderately forgotten twenty years of fellowship, he accepted the hospitality of his timely rescuers, and travelled with them to their foot-hill home in the orchard belt on the eastern slope of the Coast Range.

There, in the precincts of Pleasant Valley, Edwards worked most cheerfully through the late autumn, winning the men by his

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industry, the women by his handiness, and the children by the antics of his monkey and the yarns of his evenings.

That his Thanksgiving might be complete, Providence suddenly deprived him of the uncle on whose farm he had first seen the light of day, and to fill the void occasioned by the loss of one whom he remembered chiefly as a taskmaster, gave to him the estate of the dear departed. Reduced, through the medium of letters, deeds, notaries, commissioners and lawyers, to ready cash, the estate seemed acceptable and untainted with the well-remembered, ever-recurring necessity of picking up stones on half-holidays.

With five thousand dollars, net cash, on hand, Tyler Edwards was prepared to establish himself as a freeholder, and, the terms shortly agreed upon and amicably concluded, he received from Burbank Appletree, his camping friend, a deed conveying to him twenty acres of land planted with large, well-selected and productive apricot, peach, prune and pear trees. With the residue of his legacy Edwards promptly ordered a modest consignment of household furniture, an Italian hand-organ included, and then proceeded to sink a well and build for himself a house, barn, chicken-house and quarters for Chinese laborers, first, however, setting aside a tidy balance in the bank over against a contingency.

The contingency's name was Hilda, and a prettier, more even-tempered, and capable contingency never crept into the background of a man's thoughts — yes, or called for more planning or diplomacy. For Hilda was the only daughter of Gottfried Baumgartner and Frieda his frau, and, as worthy, well-established and thrifty German-American orchardists, they saw no reason for her contracting any marriage not extremely advantageous and in every sense satisfactory.

Now Fate, or perhaps it is Providence, has an equitable little way of balancing things, stroking your right cheek so gently, and, even while the responsive smiles are shining the merriest, landing a smarting blow on the left cheek to the end that brimming eyes may realize the intricacies of the game of life.

So when Tyler, his legacy well laid out, called upon the fair Hilda, and putting his love in words, asked her to be the mistress of his new home, he felt that her "Yes, dear," dissolved all the shadows of life. But after she had given him a pan of spiced

cookies, each with an almond in the center, and allowed him a kiss, she shook her head, and raising her finger, said firmly, "Only one now, Tyler; you must see the Papa and Mamma."

And while Papa Baumgartner admitted that Herr Edwards had a nice little orchard and voted the Republican ticket and seemed in every way a good neighbor, and while Mamma Baumgartner had been glad to see him going to church and approved of his smoking a pipe — in place of cigarettes — and had noticed the tidiness of his home, they both were doubtful concerning his stability, and before Hilda could marry him he must prove himself a thorough-going landsman, entirely cured of sailor-like roving — though meantime he might call on Sundays.

Hilda bowed her submission, as became an obedient daughter, and rushed to the oven where her bread had nearly burned during the sitting of the family council, and Tyler, being advised that five years would be a reasonable period of probation, left the farm faintly cheered by the promise that any act on his part evidencing extreme land-like adaptability or horticultural ability might serve to reduce the probation, and thoroughly upset at the sight of the approaching form of 'Bank Appletree. For 'Bank was an undiscouraged widower, a large land-owner, and a close friend of Herr Baumgartner.

But more than a cautious papa, a doubtful mamma, and an encroaching widower are requisite to confound the spirits of one who has travelled the stormy waves and risen from cabin-boy to captain, and particularly so with a captain who has begun life in the sharp preparatory school of a rocky Connecticut farm. And yet, though Tyler Edwards plotted and schemed with the ingenuity of a Yankee and the pertinacity of a sailor-man, the five years loomed greatly and lessened unappreciatively while every fortnight increased the frequency of the visits of the ardent Appletree to the home of the Baumgartners.

Tyler, however, excelled in resisting discouragement, and right bravely he sparked the fair Hilda on Sundays, cultivated and pruned his acres on week days and seriously deliberated at all hours. "Chink," the companion of his vigils, clambered from limb to limb while the pruning progressed, and in the evenings danced to the doubtful hand-organ melodies turned forth by his

master. The latter, sitting on a box by the kitchen stove, his head inclined, his right hand working steadily, would gravely converse with his pet. "'Chink,' you monk you," he would say, "you have more adaptability than the rest of us, can't you give me an idea?" And the monkey, happy in blue overalls, long-disused cup in hand, would tilt his cap rakishly to one side and seriously chatter a sympathetic response.

Master and monkey, they had been together in the tropics and on the high seas, they had suffered and become castaways, even now they lived an isolated life, for, until their arrival, the Valley had never known a sailor or a monkey. "A real monkey, that is," as old Peter Gruncher said: "'Course we've had Chinees, which are cousins to 'em, ever since we begun raisin' fruit in the '70's."

The evenly distributed rains of the winter were succeeded by a wondrous, growth-producing spring, and even while the great orchards were casting aside their pink and white gowns each of the three "oldest inhabitants" in the Valley was predicting unprecedented crops. Soon the orchardists were compelled to relieve the laden boughs of their over-abundance by "thinning-out" the green fruit; an occupation rich in joy for the "monk" who gleefully climbed to the highest limbs of the sturdy trees and threw down the hard fruit, chattering frightfully and grimacing fearfully over the result of the first sour apricot carried to his mouth.

The season wore on. Once only did Tyler Edwards and "Chink" evince any evidence of their supposed sailor-like restlessness. Then, in truth, they merely made a hasty trip to San Francisco, where they eagerly sniffed the salt air, and wandered about the "water-front" eyeing the shipping with approval.

But the Sunday following their return Tyler found Papa Baumgartner palpably displeased because of the trip, and more irascible than ever, for rumor of labor troubles had reached the Valley. Along the "water-front" frequent had been the prophecies heard by Tyler of a great strike soon to come — and more important still, the Chinese, who were to harvest the Valley's fruit crop, had announced a peremptory advance in wages.

Already Appletree had begun to encroach upon Tyler's Sundays, and this day the latter retired immediately after his rival's appearance on the field. Incidentally, Elmine Schlosser, Hilda's

convent friend from Dixon, arrived close upon Tyler's departure — he might almost have seen her buggy approaching, and he would know that in her presence 'Bank would do no courting.

To her friend, Hilda poured forth her saddened heart, briefly disposing of Appletree by saying, "And think, if I married him people would call our little childers, 'Crab-apples,' I know they would. There — I'll never marry him, no sir-ee." Which statement, besides settling the widower's case, also showed that the fair Hilda had that simple confidence in the increase of her race later to be lauded as the greatest of virtues.

But while Hilda was thus unceremoniously disposing of Appletree, that comfortable widower was calmly sweeping all clouds aside from the labor horizon and holding forth with the greatest facility on the vital subjects of pear blight and lady-bugs, and the proper means of avoidance thereof, and Papa Baumgartner, all attention, was opining to himself how advantageous it would be to have a son-in-law so very resourceful and with such horticultural acumen; and Mamma Baumgartner meantime, was mentally anathematizing her pet aversion, the faithful "Chink," and out in the world the "Strike of '94" was ready for launching.

Monday the storm broke. The boxes of fruit, so skilfully packed, were peremptorily refused by the expressman at the stations, and the bewildered drivers turned their teams and drove back to the astonished and enraged orchardists, who at a glance saw their eastern fruit decaying en route, and their unpicked peaches and "'cots" a total loss.

"Pick and dry" became the watchword. "To Halifax with the railroad and strikes," tersely said the freeholders. And then the strike came nearer. That made a difference. In some organization partially armed, a body of men marched through the Valley, giving the useful Chinese short notice to leave — "Away with the Chinamen," was the slogan. And after a few stray shots the alarmed Mongolians awaited no further warning — they left.

"Pick and dry," was still the watchword, and by the force of necessity the angered fruit-growers grudgingly employed vagrant whites, only to see the raw hands falter under the hot sun which lends a blush to the peach and a radiance to the pear. The new men moved on, while the frightened Chinese, instructed by their

tong leaders, refused to return until another season. Unkind bullets from unknown guns greeted the few who crept back, — for the strikers had left pickets on guard — and the first night after the return of these stragglers a bonfire of orchard ladders illuminated the darkness. By its light the horror-stricken Coolies packed their pipes and tea-pots and incontinently fled.

The residents of the Valley might cut and dry; they were too few to also pick. Burbank Appletree, Peter Gruncher and almost all the other men threw up their hands and accepted the inevitable with stolid growls.

In the bosom of his family Papa Baumgartner wailed loudly. To lose his great crop of prunes, his late peaches and pears! To happen it must not. His friend Appletree should save the crop; he would give him a third for his help, yes, a half; or he might have Hilda — Yes, he should have Hilda, that sailor Edwards should not count; 'Bank Appletree should save the crop, the fine crop.

"Damn it," replied Appletree, hearing the lament, "I can't help you. Wouldn't I save my own, if I could?"

Then Papa Baumgartner wailed in public; anyone could have half his crop, or his daughter for that matter, if they would save the fruit.

And Hilda herself now became disconsolate, not at her father's loss, though, as a thrifty girl, it disturbed her, but on a more personal account, for suddenly and without explanation or leave-taking, her sailor-man disappeared.

"Him an' 'Chink' has got some sense; nothin' doin' here an' the've gone campin'," said Gruncher, remarking upon seeing the two leaving the Valley in a covered wagon.

But Tyler Edwards was not disposed by nature or inclined from experience to go a-pleasuring in stress of weather. On the contrary, in the heaviest storms he had ever labored the hardest and his wits been the keenest, and with the need of saving his crop and the possibility of a speedy espousal of the fair Hilda, his active brain evolved a fertile Yankee scheme.

From his life in the tropics and long acquaintance with "Chink," he had become well aware of the adaptability and imitative powers of monkey-kind; he knew, moreover, how his pet had

enjoyed assisting in the "thinning out" of the fruit, and down on the "Barbary Coast" in San Francisco he had heard of the expected arrival of a ship-load of monkeys, consigned to Chicago for, it was unworthily hinted, trial use in the meat-corning houses. The strike would delay the Chicago consignment.

Leaving his team at Suisun of a Monday, the sailor travelled to San Francisco by boat, once again filling his grateful lungs with salty air; and by nine in the evening of the Wednesday following, he drove his wagon into Pleasant Valley, "Chink" sitting under cover in the back, chatting sociably to nine of his brethren and sistren who listened attentively or responded excitably from behind the slats of an immense crate.

Late that evening the disconsolate Hilda sat up in bed and dried her eyes, as the dear sound of the hand-organ again stole out upon the quiet hill air. Little did she realize, however, that her returned suitor with his devoted "Chink" was giving a first lesson to those who were soon to enable him to win her hand.

The following day, en route for the Coast, himself on a camping trip, Peter Gruncher, to his surprise, heard Chinese words coming from Tyler's premises, "Gee, Samn, Tze, Ingz—" Curious, he turned from the highway, and driving in, found, to his increased astonishment, that Edwards had returned and was sitting under a large peach-tree, holding a small whip in one hand and playing his ancient hand-organ with the other. Sworn to secrecy concerning what was up the tree, Gruncher continued on his camping trip, periodically bursting out unexpectedly in guffaws of amusement.

Sunday it was rumored about that Tyler Edwards had a number of new pickers at his place. Some said they were "kid Chinees from 'Frisco," others claimed that they were a small, up-country variety of "Japs," just discovered; that afternoon it was known that this strange crew had picked his fruit and that he wanted cutters at his packing shed the next afternoon. Hard on this last report, came the news that he had offered to pick Gottfried Baumgartner's entire crop in a day, provided Hilda was the consideration.

Such a proposition, when it was known that no ten men could accomplish such an undertaking!

Then word went around the Valley that Papa Baumgartner had

accepted the offer, the work to begin early Monday, and that Edwards had requested the minister, who had held services in the schoolhouse, to stay over a day, and had even sent to Fairfield for a marriage-license. Nobody but a sailor could be so foolishly sanguine; and all the ladders burned, too.

By daylight the scattered residents of the Valley were gathered about the Baumgartner orchard to witness the affair. Promptly at 5.30 A. M., Tyler Edwards drove up in a buggy, the minister accompanying him, but neither Papa Baumgartner nor the neighbors had time to notice the minister; their eyes were too busy in watching the covered wagon following the buggy.

Not that the sight of "Chink" in his little blue overalls seriously driving old "Dolly" — the mare sold at a high price to Edwards with the conscientious thought that she was a safe animal for a sailor — was unwonted, but in place of a force of jabbering Coolies, nine other monkeys, also dressed in little blue overalls, and each as near like the driver as two peas may be alike, rode in the wagon, four sitting with "Chink" in front and holding tightly fore and aft to the seat, five more side by side on the back seat. "Chink" was seriously watching "Dolly," the other nine with all seriousness were watching "Chink."

The wagon stopped. Tyler Edwards tied "Dolly" to a shaded hitching post; over the side of the wagon climbed "Chink," after him trooped his nine brethren and sistren, the curled tip of a tail showing from the bottom of each of their nine right trouser-legs.

"Mein Gott im Himmel!" exclaimed Papa Baumgartner.

"Gut Gott!' ejaculated Mamma Baumgartner.

"Good little Chink," cried Hilda Baumgartner.

"The Devil!" exclaimed the neighbors.

From the wagon Edwards took two capacious lug-boxes and placed them at the foot of a large peach-tree, while ten pairs of small bright eyes, looking out from gray, old-men faces, watched him closely; next he carefully unloaded his hand-organ, and the tips of ten tails curled and twitched below the bottoms of ten right trouser-legs. Finally he lifted out ten lard-pails, and ten pairs of small, hairy hands seized upon them and peered at the bottoms, or turned them upside down, disclosing the numerals up to ten, written in large green letters. With some slight disturb-

ance the pails were sorted about; then Tyler Edwards, first lifting "Chink" into the peach-tree, began on the hand-organ.

Instantly "Chink" rushed among the higher branches, drew his tail out of his trouser-leg, wrapped it around a limb, dropping the wire bail of the lard-pail into the grip of the curling end of that useful appendage, and with all four hands and feet reached out for the ripe peaches; simultaneously, his nine brethren and sistren scurried up the tree and, drawing out their nine respective tails from their nine respective right-trouser-legs, wrapped them around the limbs, each tail seizing in its curling end the wire bail of a lard-pail, and forty hands and feet literally poured peaches into the ten pails. Tump, tump, tump, resounded the first falling against the tin bottoms.

The devoted "Chink," his pail quickly filled, slipped down the tree, carefully poured the fruit into one of the lug-boxes, and scampered up again, keeping pace with the gayer time of the hand-organ.

No longer able to control himself, Papa Baumgartner rushed over to the lug-box. "Green and clawed are none of them. Der Teufel! How does you that do?"

"Saw how 'Chink' liked to pick 'em a while back, so I let the monks watch us pick. They are such imitative devils. When 'Chink' first began picking, the fruit was green; he ate a green apricot and got a stomach-ache, and since then he won't put one in his mouth. I guess he told the others about the ache, or perhaps they think all green is bad, for they had an awful time after licking some of the green paint off the pails."

"Der Teufel, der Teufel!" ejaculated Papa Baumgartner.

"So, so, so," murmured Mamma Baumgartner in amazement.

"Would someone like some spiced cookies?" asked Hilda, with hospitable intent.

"And they don't need ladders. Don't it all beat the Dutch?" remarked a neighbor in amazement.

"Here 'Chink,' Gee, Samn, Tze, Inz —" began Edwards, calling his laborers by their numerical Mongolian names. The tree was picked. Down came every monkey, and up another tree they were sent.

The forty hands and feet worked rapidly; the trees were being

stripped at an amazing speed. The neighbors, their curiosity satisfied, drew away and returned to their homes, contending sharply among themselves over the merits and disadvantages of such new-fangled methods. The minister and Papa Baumgartner chatted together. Mamma Baumgartner disappeared into the kitchen. Hilda stood by Tyler Edwards.

"Can we be married now?" he asked.

"Just as soon as the peaches are picked, Papa says. Perhaps—"

"Yes?"

"The monkeys work to the time of the music, don't they?"

"Yes, dear."

"Then perhaps I can help you, and we can be married at noon."

She hastened into the house, and immediately her piano burst forth with "Der Wasserfall." At the sprightly air, "Chink" nearly upset his paii in a frantic effort to increase his speed, while "Gee" and "Samn" and their brethren and sistren broke out in cries of joy.

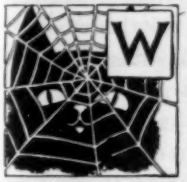
Tyler Edwards rested while the piece continued. It was followed by "Die Wacht am Rhein." At this the whole ten redoubled their efforts and Papa Baumgartner became wildly excited:—

"See, see," he exclaimed, "der little Teufels. Der best ten men in der Valley. Ja," and he, too, pranced about in his excitement. "Ja," he cried, "we the wedding now will have recht quick." And calling Mamma Baumgartner and Hilda, and putting the hired boy at the hand-organ, Papa Baumgartner gave away his fair daughter, the minister performing the service to the melodious accompaniment of the ancient instrument.

"Chink" made one more record: he was a welcome third party on a honeymoon trip. For Hilda said he must not miss their voyage to Honolulu.

The Case of Burbanks vs. Nature.*

BY VIRGINIA M. CORNELL.



HEN Robert Burbanks was eighteen years of age, he discovered that life held keen zests and excitements, and was not the phlegmatic substance he had conceived it to be. This discovery came to him through his father having decided that the banking business was a good one for Robert to follow, and his own consequent acceptance of a clerkship in the "Keystone National," presided over by Mr. Burbanks' friend, Colonel Anderson.

There are not, to be sure, many violent excitements connected with the life of a young bank clerk whose duties are apt to be more abundant than interesting, but to a country-bred boy of observing temperament, life itself in a goodly sized city is, for a time at least, an exciting event. To young Robert Burbanks this pleasurable interest did not soon abate; rather, as new vistas opened, he grew more keenly alert to peer into them. These chanced to be, for the most part, of the sort that are in themselves healthy and normal; it was only the unusual number of his new outlooks, and the zeal which he brought to the exploration of them, which boded Robert ill.

His first keen interest, outside of the bank, grew out of his gaining a friendly footing in the office of the *Morning Herald*, which occupied a part of the Keystone Building. The editor of that paper took a brisk liking to the fresh-faced lad from the bank below, and made him welcome to his sanctum. The boy had never known how much was contained in the making of the newspapers they had been in the habit of reading at home, and he came directly to take a lively interest in the nightly compiling of the day's events; soon acquiring as keen a scent for news as any reporter on the staff, and becoming as skilled in the making of a "scoop" as any one.

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"Boy, you were cut out for a newspaper man," the editor once assured him, "Banking's out of your line."

Robert could not wholly accept this; he had not even begun to lose interest in his glimpses of the intricate workings of the great banking system of which he considered himself an humble part. The day's routine, irksome to most of the clerks, was a delight to him. He looked at the cashier of the "Keystone," trained through this same routine to an understanding of the smallest detail of the business, and capable thereby of guarding its great interests, and to his eyes this man's place was a goal eagerly to be aspired to. He thought of himself in future years, keen-eyed and competent, holding a position of responsibility and trust; still further on, at the head of some great system, holding in his own hands the well-being of thousands, and these thoughts quickened him, and made possible his unusually rapid advancement.

When Robert was yet a little under twenty-one, his mind caught, with absorbing zeal, at a new aspect of life. It was far removed from either banking or newspaper making, yet was brought naturally about by his connection with the latter. It had been a good many months since the beginning of his friendship with the editor of the *Herald*, but his zest in that direction had not subsided. He served the "Keystone" faithfully during its daily working hours, but the nights in the week were few when he failed to see that the *Herald* went safely to press in the morning. After that was accomplished, he generally hurried to his room to snatch a few hours' sleep before the bank opened, but occasionally his brain refused even for that little time to suspend its busy action, and Nature, keeping tab upon his shortcomings toward herself, wrote down a sleepless twenty-four hours upon the debit side of her ledger in her account with him.

The unpaid debts he owed her had grown to considerable proportions when he interviewed for the *Herald* a notorious safe-breaker at the city jail. Young Burbanks was greatly interested in the law breaker, a well-put-up, well-spoken man of forty, with eyes that looked like steel and belonged in just such a face, Robert thought. The other, upon his part, found a distraction from contemplating his fallen fortunes in talking to the youth of days of bygone, reckless darings when they had been in the ascendant.

"There's a zest in the life," he told his listener, "in the parts you play, the confidence you acquire in your own nerve and cunning. And there's more, too. Did you know that strange noises in the night have the same terrors for a burglar that they have to a law-abiding citizen? Or that he's as little immune from the cowardices of humanity as any one else? Before now I've been far more scared by a fellow-being in gown and slippers than he was of me with my mask and revolver. The world's akin, and the class I belong to, broadly speaking, not an exception. We take only what we want or need, and when the time comes as it has to me, to pay for it, we pay, and nobody does more. Do you get the idea, young man?"

Robert thought he did, and during the next three years imbodied his thoughts upon the subject in a book which was in reality quite a wonderful psychological study of crime in all its kinds and aspects. It contained many startling and original ideas, and gave its author a good deal of prestige among the people to whom it appealed. It was a most remarkable work to have proceeded from so young a mind, the mind, too, of an individual whose daily working hours were occupied with the closest and most strenuous of calculations in figures. For Robert continued to keep his books at the bank with marvelous accuracy, and Nature, too, kept a careful eye upon hers, in her account with Burbanks, putting down with a frequency which should have been alarming, a sleepless night or two on the wrong side of her ledger.

Burbanks indeed said to himself occasionally during the following years that he "must get more sleep"; he became vaguely startled, sometimes, remembering how infrequent were his mind's lapses into the oblivion of slumber, but he found no time for the abatement of his pursuits and zests, and the habit of sandwiching a few hours' unconsciousness between them was becoming a hard one to keep. The time when his eyes could be prevailed upon to close in simple, orthodox fashion finally passed altogether, and, at the end of a period of years of almost unprecedented activity of mind, he came face to face with the astounding discovery that he did not sleep at all!

He was dismayed, frightened, driven almost to the verge of distraction by his realization of this alarming condition — alarm-

ing because of its dangerous reputation — otherwise it did not trouble him; he simply did not feel the need of sleep. Yet, knowing the law of nature in this regard, he became frantic to sleep, even though he felt no natural desire to do so. "I must sleep! I cannot live without sleep!" He spent hours in a vain endeavor to bring slumber to his eyes, importuning that Nature whose laws he had disregarded, but she, in revenge, turned a deaf ear to his pleadings. He could not sleep! Gradually he became more composed. The end of all men must in due time arrive; it was a sure event. If it were to come now and in this unusual manner to him, — well, he had had more of life than most men. Let the end come when and as it would, he would meet it philosophically.

But — strange contradiction of introvertible fact — the end for which Robert Burbanks thus prepared himself, did not come. He still continued to live, actively, healthily normal, save for the seemingly impossible condition that he never, for one moment, lost consciousness in slumber. Systematic relaxation he imposed upon himself, a number of hours in each twenty-four in which he schooled his mind to rest absolutely from every waking thought, — but he never slept!

It had taken considerably more than a decade of years to bring this culmination. Burbanks was now in the vicinity of thirty-five, and stood practically at the head of the "Keystone National." As this bank now held large deposits of his own, he the more naturally guarded its safety as guarding his own property; therefore, when about this time a number of bold safe robberies had alarmed the various banks of the city into unusual precautionary measures, Burbanks, as a matter of course, took a lively interest in them. Out of this general interest grew in his mind a speculation as to the personality back of the robberies, and, striking back to an old trail, Robert Burbanks became alert, not only to protect his property, but also to discover what manner of man or men threatened it.

He fitted up accordingly, for his own occupancy, a tiny den of a room in close proximity to the deposit vaults, and here, with a couch upon which to pass his prescribed hours of inactivity, and a table loaded with books and papers, he began to spend his nights. The presence of the night watchman near at hand gave a

sense of human companionship, and he further arranged with his good friend McCarthy, a typical "policeman of the beat," to make it convenient to pass that way at least once during the small hours of the morning. Thus he felt himself sure of a victorious meeting with the bank burglars, providing they should be unwise enough to court the meeting.

Upon one particular day, about this period, Burbanks began to be impressed with the sense of something impending over him. During the course of the afternoon he became weighed down with melancholy, which all at once he ascribed to his peculiar condition of sleeplessness. For the first time he saw it as a malady, a thing to set him apart from other men, to make him an object of curiosity and conjecture; to remove him from the vigorous, active class to which he belonged, and place him among the freaks and abnormalities. An instinct, no doubt referable to this same thought, had hitherto kept him silent upon the subject. For himself he had been thoroughly satisfied that his mind had not lost its usual normal balance, and he had diagnosed his own case as one in which an unnatural condition brought about by a slow process of purely healthy and pleasurable departures from set laws had become a natural one. Yet he was aware that, reasonable as this explanation might sound to his own ears, to other men it could not help containing an element of the "off color," the morbid. He began to fear that he had inadvertently let slip some word which might give a clue to the discovery of what now seemed a guilty and baleful secret. He felt bent under the weight which attaches to a thing concealed. The dread of exposure grew upon him. He saw himself pictured, gazed at, exploited in dime museums and yellow journals as "the man who never slept." His usual clear sight and keen sense deserted him; he was miserable.

Having dragged through a wretched day in this fashion, he entered upon the hours of a still more wretched night. The isolation which they brought aggravated a thousand-fold his distressing thoughts until, as the clock in his little den ticked on toward midnight, he reached a climax of mental suffering not longer to be endured.

He opened the table drawer and took from it the revolver with which he had provided himself against the possible coming of the

bank robbers. It looked a kind little medium of release from the burden of a man's life grown too heavy. Yet, instead of using it at once, he slipped the hand holding it under his evening paper, which lay carelessly thrown upon the table, and sat leaning back in his chair, thinking dully of the route he was about to take, and speculating vaguely as to the whereabouts of its end. But he was little concerned regarding either; his mind felt dazed, weakened and wearied by the strain his distress over his sleepless condition had brought upon it.

He looked up suddenly, roused by the consciousness of another presence. A masked man stood in the open doorway with a revolver leveled at Burbanks' head, and eyes, through the slits in his mask, covering him.

"Throw up your hands," he commanded.

Burbanks' mind began to act again, mechanically, but swiftly. "With pleasure," he said. He drew his right hand with an easy movement from beneath the paper which covered it, and, in another instant, the astounded man in the doorway was confronting the exact situation which faced the other — certain death if he moved a muscle.

Burbanks' cool voice cut into the silence. "Will you shoot first or shall I?"

"Damn!" in the one concise exclamation was the burglar's complete grasping of the situation, surely a situation never met with before!

The man in the door measured the man in the chair, — measured, and knew himself matched. The pulling of the trigger around which his finger was crooked, meant, even if in death, the discharge of the other man's weapon, and he never doubted but that the other man's aim would be as true as his own. Moments passed, the law breaker watching with the eyes of a man in a desperate strait, concentrating his vision toward the instant's grasp of the slightest loophole of advantage; Burbanks returning the look with a fixity of gaze which to the other seemed the watchfulness of an alert adversary, but which in reality was the glassy stare of a man unable to rouse himself from the lethargic desire of sleep!

For Burbanks was by sheer force of will only, keeping his eyes open. He was sleepy — so sleepy! He knew now that he had been

in the very last stage of waking consciousness when he had been roused by the burglar's presence, that in another moment he would have been in possession of a boon long denied him, the boon of slumber. This was what had been coming over him all day, what he had felt impending, — sleep — blessed sleep!

How he coveted it — yearned for its soothing oblivion! He wanted to ask the man whose revolver was pointing straight between his eyes to postpone his raid on the bank until a more convenient season; tonight he, Burbanks, wanted to sleep. A line of an absurd song filtered through his brain:

"Please go 'way and let me sleep."

The watchful eyes of the man in the doorway saw no lessening of the other's moveless regard. Its seeming intensity, so silent, so unstirring was it, began to rasp his nerves. He wished the man in the chair would speak, break the uncanny spell that seemed to be coming over them; call for help; do something to give the other a chance to act, to relieve the strain they must both be under.

Burbanks was trying with all his vigorous powers of resistance to keep awake — to keep his revolver pointed steadily toward the spot between the two slits in the burglar's mask. This was clearly his duty. If he were to go to sleep — probably the night watchman was dozing too — there was nothing to hinder the bank's suffering heavy loss before morning. But if the man had only come some other night! If he would but become tired of standing there in the door, and go quietly away! The absurd line filtered through his brain again:

"Please go 'way and let me sleep."

The nerves of the man in the doorway were at keenest tension. By a strong effort of will he quelled the rising alarm he felt at the other's silent movelessness, at the suggestion of something uncanny, unreal about him. He fought the temptation toward superstition, toward the thought that his tendency to fear was the sure percursor of disaster, and redoubled his vigilance lest one flicker of his adversary's eyelids, one instant's cessation of that steady gaze should escape him.

Burbanks was so sleepy! The line of the absurd song kept repeating itself. He remembered the melody that went with the

song, a crooning, soothing melody. It began to float rhythmically through his brain with its successive accompanying words:

"Sleep to me is something sweet—"

How sweet — how blessedly sweet! Just to let the eyes close — to cease holding the revolver steady toward the spots between the slits in the mask! If the man would but go away — the rhythmical melody in his brain was so soothing — so satisfying —

"— I'd rather — sleep — than eat —"

"Drop it!" a big voice, pitched to a low but peremptory tone, spoke close to the bank robber's ear. He turned his eyes, felt McCarthy's pistol at his temple, remembered the weapon leveled at him from the front, — and yielded to the inevitable. Even the inevitable was a relief from the tense moments just passed.

The snapping of the handcuffs upon his wrists brought the night watchman to wonder, to question McCarthy, to congratulate. An exclamation of astonishment from the handcuffed man as he glanced toward the chair where his late adversary sat, caused the eyes of the other two to follow his, and they, too, stared in amazement. Burbanks' arms were outstretched across the table, his head resting upon them; his eyes were closed, his chest rose and fell with his deep, unconscious respirations. He was asleep!

Ram Singh and Engel Sahib.*

BY WILL KENYON.

HE Lascars were butchering a sheep in the forepeak galley, and the warm scent of fresh blood stirred up pandemonium among the jungle folk in the cages lashed to the deck by the forehatches. The sea was a lake of oil and barren of a ripple, save where the big twin screws threw astern a long lane of swirling, bubbling phosphorescent flame. It was stifling hot — the decks were like hot plates — and there was scarcely enough breeze to blow out a match as I joined Max Schlieman in the bows.

It was Schlieman's business to ransack creation, poking into and out of more out-of-the-way corners of the earth than civilization dreams exist, gathering wild beasts, unheard-of birds known only to Audubon societies, and weird, uncanny "freaks" for American dealers. He was a strange man, a German, with odd tricks of speech and many surprising customs borrowed from Hindoo and Mussulman and the savage of remote hill countries. He was altogether impossible from a civilized standpoint, but his rich and varied experiences dimmed the Arabian Nights for me.

"Good!" said Max, pointing with his pipe to the cages below. "Dose fellows are yelling fine down dere; raw blood brings back dreams of liberty, when they chase and make the kill themselves. Yell and scream, unhappy ones."

As if in answer, the deep-throated roars of Bengal tigers rose in unison with the cat-like shrieks of leopards from the far-off Himalayas; half a thousand of the little monkeys that die of homesickness gibbered obscenely, while a fiendish ourang-outang rattled the grating of his cage and yelled like a soul in torment, until the mighty elephants rocked against their chains and trumpeted in fear. A loathsome hyena laughed as a maniac.

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It was a bizarre ensemble we looked down upon in the thick tropical dusk. The lithe, dark-skinned Lascars, naked save for a breech-cloth, grimy with coal dust or glistening with oil from the engines; the huge elephants swaying to and fro in the gloom, the serpent-like trunks ceaselessly winnowing wisps of hay over their broad backs; and the unseen children of forest and jungle voicing their unrest. It was hot beyond belief, and the pace of the ship fouled the air with reek of wild beasts and the smell of the East from the Lascars' foul kennel in the fore-peak.

"Lascars!" grunted Schlieman, gazing enviously at the half-dozen naked forms sprawled in the bows and sleeping peacefully through heat and uproar; "I belief a Lascar could sleep in hell and haf sweet dreams. Ram Singh! Ram Singh *ho!*" he shouted above the din to his native helper, "turn a hose on the *hathis* — elephants — to make them cool. So!"

Gradually the uproar subsided and gave place to the orderly, accustomed noises of the night — the swish of the oily sea on the forefoot, the muffled tramp of the engines, the clanging half-hourly note of the ship's bell, and the monotonous foreign chatter of the Lascar crew. I lay watching the heat-lightning play all around the horizon, and must have been drowsing, for Schlieman's voice startled me.

"Last time I bring along some specimens to New York," he said, "our flag was flying at half-mast. You see? — somebody haf died. Is it too hot to listen why that soul flew away, or will I tell you a tale which only we two know, Ram Singh and I? Listen, then, my friend.

"When I was collecting that time I travel like the Wandering Jew. Gott im Himmel! I freeze in the Himalayas, and nearly lose my life falling from the Roof of the World, to get some snow leopards; later I was roast alive in jungles. All in the day's work. For a year I barely existed — I was a pariah dog — and it was good to come to Calcutta again, where I picked up little Ram Singh. Like it? My friend, so soon as I leave the smell of the East behind me at Port Said, I do not live until it is in my nostrils again. Yes; I come back always to answer the call. Europe and America are too sanitary — too clean.

"I loaded my cages and elephants on a German freighter at

Calcutta. She looked like Noah's Ark — if you belief that extraordinary cruise — and you would not suspect there was a million dollars in burlap, jute, hides and precious woods under her hatches. I tear my hair when I think of such a trip. It was so hot the decks were like stove-lids; and I sit still and see four tigers, two leopards, a white elephant — a giant tusker — die en route, to say noddings of a hundred monkeys. Monkeys, liddle monkeys, drive me crazy. As ryots die of cholera, so die liddle monkeys of what books call nostalgia; but it is what we know as heimweh — homesickness. It is as deadly as cobra poison, only slower.

"Der second officer, Engel, was a man with a pig's head. Lombroso would haf called him a mattoid; certainly his brow, chin and ear were unlovely. He was a cruel man; and before I know him three days I see he will make trouble for me and the poor helpless beasts. For hours he loafed by the cages, day and night, poking sticks and laughing, until my beasts get wild, insane rage and yell like demons. Den he would go away laughing — this great black devil, with his enormous mis-shapen ears of a degenerate. I haf seen him throw his head back and laugh when he succeeds to make a liddle monkey cry like a baby. He was *not* a man; he was a devil, and I hate him for the black heart in his breast. We haf words, hot, ugly words, when he will not keep away from my beasts.

"One day Ram Singh was cleaning out cages with a great iron poker eight feet long, and he dropped it. Engel was standing behind — Ram Singh could not know — and the poker smashed Engel's great toe. He went white as a bone from pain and anger, and he smote poor Ram Singh to the deck like a bullock under a pole-ax. Herr Gott! I saw that man-beast grin like a great ape and limp away.

"Yet anoder time Engel strike Ram Singh — in front of Rajah's cage. Rajah was a glorious Bengal tiger taken in the Ganges delta; fifteen feet from tip to tip, if you will belief me. Engel was standing there poking, poking, always poking with a long stick. If it was accident, I cannot say for true, but Ram Singh staggered past and spill filthy slops over Engel's fresh white suit; and he look up at him, grinning. Then Engel struck a second time, full on the mouth, and liddle Ram Singh went down

like a stone in a well. He lay so close to Rajah's cage the carrion breath was hot in his face, and the big beast roared just like those fellows tonight when they smell sheep's blood, for Ram Singh was all bloody.

"Ram Singh lay there looking death out of his hazel eyes at Engel, who laughs and turns away on his heel before I could kill him. Gott! How mad was I! But Ram Singh spat out t'ree teet', and with the taste of his own blood in his mouth, and the tiger snarling in his ear, he cursed the going of Engel Sahib, who haf done him such a great wrong and made him a laughing-stock among his fellows. Ram Singh called him a swine, a jackal, a dog; he defiled Engel's ancestors and cursed all his womankind for handmaidens of sin. And then, quite slowly, but not speaking clearly for want of his teet', he swore by the Bull, and by God, and even by the Prophet whom he borrowed, that when the tale should be written in full and the scroll rolled up, he, Ram Singh, would smile through the gap in his teeth with his honor whole again.

"So swore Ram Singh. But Engel Sahib was a German pig, and he could not understand; he only laughed. But I — I who know the native as myself — I was afraid for him. And again he only laughed and would not listen. So, like Pilate, I washed my hands and waited.

"One week later, a night like tonight, only darker and hotter, it came. Nobody was moving except that mad Engel, who was teasing my poor Rajah with the long stick, and laughing like the fiend he was. I could hear the big tiger roar and snarl and fight the stick; I say in my heart a prayer for him to come a liddle nearer the cage, just a liddle bit. Did my soul reach out and whisper to Ram Singh? I do not know. Was it a sending? I do not know. But I belief as much as I belief anything, though no man saw, that Ram Singh crept up behind and shoved Engel Sahib against the cage grating. It was done so quick no man could see, no man could help, and Engel went out to his God with a woman's shriek on his coward's lips. Gott! It was terrible. The beasts roared as a thousand jungles, the Lascars whimpered like gibbering baboons, and the officers turned pale and sick at what they saw lying there by Rajah's cage when the lanterns were brought.

It was not nice even to see mineself, and I haf looked on death in a thousand shocking forms. You haf seen an orange squeezed dry? Dot was Engel Sahib. And Rajah raged in his cage with the light in his eye that comes from killing, licking his paws and muzzle white again. Ach!

"Next day Engel was sewed up in a piece of sail-cloth, and the *Aurochs* stopped. When her trampling engines ceased running the silence was so great, so impressive, I felt all alone in the vast world; it was as still as the Rest-House of Death. Did you efer feel you was the Last Man? It is not nice. The captain stood by the grating to read a prayer of commitment, and the tears ran down his face. Soon a splash comes in the water, the ship gets under way again, and my world is peopled with sweet noise."

"And Ram Singh? What of him?" I asked.

"My friend, as you know, I did not see — no man saw; wherefore Ram Singh would lie. But I looked deep down in his eyes and said: 'Ram Singh, what happened to Engel Sahib?' And he smiled through the gap in his teeth, for his honor was whole again. 'Heaven born,' said he, 'he was crushed by the tiger and died; the rest is with God.' Which was true — so far as it goes. All the same, it was a big price for Engel Sahib to pay for t'ree teet'."

The Cab that Waited.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

UTTING the envelope and drawing out the folded sheet within, he read:

BRONSON STABLES:

Send Jerry with cab to my house to take me to North Station to see a friend off, and wait till I return.

PETER RUGGLES.

He called up the foreman of the stables through the speaking-tube and gave him the order. "And mind you, Jones, see that Jerry is on time," he supplemented, for it was well known at Bronson's that Ruggles' motto was, Follow orders though it break owners. Ruggles had once threatened to sue the Bronson Stables for failing to follow orders, and the clerk had been cautioned to see that Ruggles' orders should thereafter be followed to the letter — though it might break Ruggles.

Promptly at three-thirty "Cheery" Jerry, who had faithfully served the Bronson Stables since its incipiency, drew rein at the handsome stone residence of Peter Ruggles, and just then Ruggles, carrying a large magnifying glass in his hand, came hurriedly down the steps and entered the cab.

The Station was reached in about twenty minutes, and, without waiting for Jerry to dismount from his box, Peter Ruggles opened the door of the cab and leapt out.

"Wait here till I return, Jerry."

"Thim be me orders, sor, — till ye return."

"That 's my man!" Saying which, Peter Ruggles hurried into the station. He had received a telegram to the effect that a former classmate would pass through the city that afternoon, and if he would be at the North Station at four-ten he could have a few words on old times. This classmate was on his way "down East" and had with him a very fine specimen of an exceedingly rare

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beetle, which Peter Ruggles wouldn't have missed seeing for the presidency of a rubber trust. For Peter Ruggles, forty years of age, wealthy, eccentric, a bachelor and a scholar, had one passion — beetles.

The friend came, accompanied by his sister, a beautiful young lady with large gray eyes, and Peter Ruggles, drawing the magnifying glass from his pocket, proceeded to examine the beetle.

"Where did you get it?" was his first query, after a thorough scrutiny of the precious specimen.

"It was sent to me from Maine." The friend leaned over and spoke in an undertone, as one who confides to another where vast treasures are to be found. "They say there are more like it to be had down there, and I'm on my way now to find them."

Peter Ruggles gave a start, stared hard at the beetle, then at his friend; then by accident his eyes rested for a moment on the face of the young lady with the large gray eyes, and arising hastily he cried: "Others like it to be found! You certainly don't mean it!"

"I do."

"Down in Maine?"

"Down in Maine."

"Then I shall start at once for Maine!"

"Will you join us?"

Again by the merest chance the eyes of Peter Ruggles rested on the face of the young lady with the large gray eyes. "I will," he said.

The two men shook hands over the compact, and a few minutes later the train drew out for "down East," carrying Peter Ruggles' classmate, his classmate's sister, and Peter Ruggles himself, in search of an exceedingly rare variety of — beetle.

From the next station Ruggles telegraphed to his housekeeper, informing her that he would be absent from home for several weeks, and that she might shut up house for the time being and go to her sister's.

Meantime Jerry waited with his cab, and four o'clock passed; then five, then six, and still he waited. Once before the honest Irishman waited eight mortal hours for Peter Ruggles, while that gentleman was detained by a highly interesting game of whist,

and not willing to be outdone by himself, Jerry sat on his box and waited.

Seven o'clock — eight — nine — ten, — Jerry had got down once at nine and stretched his legs a bit, — but no Peter Ruggles. Eleven — twelve, — and the driver still remained like a sentry at his post. At one o'clock he left his cab a moment to get a hot drink and a bite of midnight lunch. Then he returned to his box and waited through the night, his horse falling fast asleep in the shafts.

"Me orders are to wait, an' th' divil take me if I don't wait to Doomsday!" was his cheery, if half-sleepy, comment to an inquiring fellow-cabby.

With the morning Jerry was rather drowsy, in spite of the fact that he had snatched several cat-naps during the night, and was also a little disgruntled by his long vigil. He decided to telephone the stables. He did so, and the answer came: "Will send another cab to relieve you. Orders are to wait."

A little later the relief arrived, and Jerry turned his horse's head stableward.

When night came and with it no sign of Peter Ruggles, a messenger was sent to that gentleman's home for instructions, to learn that the housekeeper had closed up the mansion and gone to her sister's.

Again the Bronson Stables referred to the written order of their patron, and as it stated positively that the cab was to wait, the cab waited, Jerry taking the relief watch through the following night with the same cab that had driven Ruggles to the North Station.

Another day passed and no Peter Ruggles appeared; then another; then still another, the two cabs and their drivers waiting in turn. Then a week passed — two weeks — three weeks — one month! At the end of the month a bill for thirty-one days and nights of cab hire was filed against Peter Ruggles, less ten per cent. discount for monthly service.

Down in Maine, Peter Ruggles, his old classmate, and a certain young lady with large gray eyes, were engaged in hunting for an exceedingly rare specimen of — beetle — and another month of delightful spring weather passed quickly by. Meantime Jerry and his relief, as well as the two cab horses, had fallen quite in

love with their peaceful and meditative occupation of waiting, and, in the beautiful line of Milton, they felt how true it is that "they also serve who only stand — or sit — and wait."

The first of July came, and still the cabs waited in their turn — how many stables could be depended upon to serve their customers so faithfully? — then came the glorious Fourth, when Jerry's horse attempted for the first time to run away.

What if he should not be waiting when Peter Ruggles returned! Jerry gasped at the thought. Then week succeeded week, until the thirty-first of July had passed, when a third monthly bill for cab service was charged to the account of Peter Ruggles.

On the morning of the second of August, as Jerry nodded peacefully on his box, a gentleman leading a lady by the arm came towards him from one of the doors of the North Station. In a moment the man on the box was all alert. He leapt down from his seat and opened the cab door, and Ruggles — for the gentleman was none other than Peter Ruggles — came forward and, hailing Jerry as if he had been gone scarcely ten minutes instead of three long months, gently deposited the lady in the cab. Then, entering the vehicle himself, holding in one hand a box which no doubt contained specimens of certain exceedingly rare beetles, Peter Ruggles thrust out his head with the brief direction, "Home, Jerry."

"Yis, sor; home!" Jerry climbed upon his box and, cracking his whip loudly, drove down the street.

The next morning at breakfast Ruggles found a bill beside his plate. It read as follows:

PETER RUGGLES, ESQ.
To BRONSON STABLES, *Dr.*

For cab service from three P. M. May 1st, 1905, to nine A. M. August 2d, 1905	
92 days 6 hours; at $10 per day	$925.00
93 nights; at $12 per night	1,116.00
	$2,041.00
Less 10% monthly disc't	204.10
	$1,836.90

Ruggles studied the bill awhile, then wrote across its face: "*Mistake. Have been away from home three months.*"

He rang for the butler, and gave him the bill. "Thompson, take this to the Bronson Stables."

The following morning Ruggles again found the bill beside his plate. It was accompanied this time by a brief note, which read:

PETER RUGGLES, ESQ.

DEAR SIR:—We quote your order of May 1st—"Send Jerry with cab to my house to take me to the North Station to see a friend off, and wait till I return."

Jerry and the cab waited.

Respectfully,

THE BRONSON STABLES.

Ruggles' hand went to his vest pocket. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "So Jerry and the cab waited! Very well." He took out a pencil and O. K.'d the bill. Then, addressing the young lady with large gray eyes, who was seated opposite him, he said:

"Dearest, I only wish this bill were larger, for then our honeymoon would have been longer!"

Timbrell's Skezooks.*

BY FRANK H. SWEET.

TIMBRELL had been riding hard for twelve hours, the first eight of which were spent mostly in looking back over his shoulders. But no one had appeared in sight, and gradually the hunted look was leaving his face. Two hours ahead were the hills, and once in their fastnesses he could defy the most desperate of pursuits.

His horse was swaying dizzily with exhaustion and fear; there were lines of dried blood below where the spurs had gored deep into the flesh, and patches of blood were about the horse's mouth and over the shoulders which the whip had cut into ridges.

As he looked down upon them, and felt the horse sway beneath him, Timbrell scowled, which made him look peculiarly ferocious. Smiles and scowls were alike to Timbrell. There were many scars upon his face, and the wrinkling of it twisted them into hideous contortions. And if one could have looked at his body there would have been found many, many other scars, all of which had been won in desperate resistance of the law, or in acts that called for the interference of the law. These scars were his glory and the law his scorn.

Presently he allowed the horse to slow down to a walk, then slipped from the saddle and moved along beside it, his hand upon the pommel. It was not out of consideration for the horse, but because the animal was indispensable to his own safety. But the horse did not know this, and at the sudden relief it turned its head back with a low whinny of gratitude.

The prairie was rolling here, with straggling bunches of sage grass and now and then a stunted tree or cluster of bushes, the outposts of the hill forests beyond. As he came to the top of one

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of the rolling elevations Timbrell checked his horse with a savage oath, throwing a curved hand over his eyes to shield them from the alkali glare. A half-mile across the prairie was a solitary horse, with down-bending head. Evidently it was tethered, and just as evidently its rider was there somewhere behind the screening sage bush, perhaps sleeping, perhaps eating his lunch, possibly just waiting. A little to one side were several small trees. Very likely other horses and their riders were behind them, also waiting — for what? The solitary horse had been left in view by an oversight, or it might be by design, to bait some one forward thinking it a stray animal.

Timbrell threw a speculative glance backward. No one was in sight, but down below the horizon was something he had left. Better go ahead at whatever hazard. Beyond the possible ambush were the fastnesses of the hill forests.

Shielding himself behind his horse, and still walking, he moved forward slowly, his rifle held in readiness for instant use. One-half the distance, two-thirds, three-fourths, and there was no sign of hostile demonstration, only the horse standing with down-bent head. Then he saw that the horse was not tethered, and that below the head was an extended form, half-hidden by the bunch grass. A sudden gleam came into Timbrell's eyes. Perhaps the man was ill or had been killed, and the faithful animal would not desert him, or perhaps he was so soundly asleep as to allow of stealthy approach. It did not matter; the horse was a fine animal, evidently fresh, and would be invaluable. So the muzzle of the rifle was shifted to the recumbent figure in case there should be any signs of life or awakening.

Not until he was within a dozen yards did he discover that the form was a woman, and that a small bundle was lying by her side, and more, that one arm of the woman was reaching feebly toward the bridle rein as though striving to remount and proceed on her journey. Timbrell uttered another imprecation, suppressed somewhat; but the rifle was lowered.

The woman heard his approach and her face turned eagerly.

"Thank God! somebody's come!" she cried feebly. "Help me on my horse now, quick. I'm dyin', an' ain't no strength to get up by myself. I must take my baby back to Peco before I give up."

"Oh, I reckon ye ain't so bad's that," grunted Timbrell, deprecatingly. He had little knowledge of women and less of babies. The scowl on his face made him hideous. But the woman did not notice that. He was a human being in a desolation when she thought she was dying alone and leaving her little one helpless. Already the indications of the end were glazing her eyes. Timbrell had lived with death and knew the signs. With a man he would have said so brutally; but a woman was an unknown element in his experience, and he temporized, embarrassed:

"Ye're plumb worn out," he said, gruffly. "All ye need's restin' up. I'll start a fire an' cook some grub, an' then ye c'n start for Peco freshened up."

"No, no," the woman protested, raising herself to an elbow by a supreme effort. "I must start at once, before it's too late. My baby's only four months old, an' must have somebody to look out for him."

"Got friends to Peco?"

"No; but some woman 'll be willin' to take him. I — I went out to the hill woods to look for my husband. Nobody'd tell me 'bout him, except he was gone. Will wa'n't a real bad man, an' I know he'd never leave me of his own self. I — I —" Her elbow gave way and she sank back upon the ground, gasping.

"Did ye find him?" gently.

A convulsive shudder went through the woman's frame. "He's — dead," she said, drearily. "I found they'd gone after him, an' — an' it's on a tree out yonder — he's dead. I'd like to be dead, too, only for the baby." Again she tried to rise, but sank back. "I — I'm afraid it's too late now," she moaned. "I'm gettin' weaker. You'll have to take — the — baby — for — me — to — Peco —" She stopped, and he bent over her quickly. The woman was beyond any more trouble, but the baby was lying on the ground throwing its little arms into the air, its blue eyes fixed inquiringly upon the blue of the sky above. Timbrell rose to his feet and gazed down at them. Peco was the place he had left, toward which he had gazed back over his shoulder.

"Well, I'll be — damned," he said, earnestly.

After a few minutes he went to the woman's horse and looked it over approvingly. It was a superb animal, and as he threw

himself into the saddle the contortions on his face were made by a grin instead of a scowl. But as he reached out to grasp the bridle of his own horse the face of the woman on the ground came beneath his gaze, and with angry impatience he slid from the saddle and began to dig a hole with his knife. A man would not have mattered, but he could not leave a woman lying on the ground like that.

When the hole was made and the woman laid in it, he glanced again toward the baby. But though there were few things that Timbrell would hesitate to do, burying a live baby was one of them, and he hastily filled in the grave and then threw himself into the saddle and rode away.

But at the end of a dozen yards there came a queer sound to him, such as he had never heard before in his life, and he turned in his saddle and then swerved the horse and rode back. The baby had grown weary of gazing at the sky and was now calling in eager, imperious little notes for human companionship. It was not a cry or whine, but an order which the notes indicated a full confidence in being obeyed. Timbrell looked down and listened for some moments, then swung his body low, caught the baby up in his arms and went dashing at full speed toward the hills. And the baby, as though enjoying the motion and the companionship, looked up into his face and crowed unqualified approval. Presently one of its tiny hands came in contact with a big finger and closed about it tightly. It was a finger of the hand which held the reins, but Timbrell shifted the reins to the other. "I'll be—damned," he said. But he said it softly, under his breath.

In the edge of the hills he stopped to get supper. The baby was crying now, not fretfully, but sharply, demanding to be fed. Timbrell had laid him down on the leaves, and several times while building the fire and preparing supper he turned and regarded him perplexedly. He was uncertain about his disposal, and had picked him up on impulse and with an idea of finding some more convenient way of getting rid of him. Assisting a man to die was one thing, assisting a helpless baby was something altogether different. There had been a lurking impression in his mind that a baby would die within a few hours, away from its mother, which would have solved the whole difficulty. But this vociferous mite

seemed to be very far from dying, and somehow Timbrell felt a good deal of respect for him for his obstinacy. Of course, he must be fed.

Timbrell bent down and peered into the widely opened mouth.

"No teeth," he muttered, disappointedly, "so, of course, he can't chaw on beef, an' I don't reckon tobacco or whiskey would ease his mind any; he's too little. Dough bread's what he needs, likely."

He went to his pack and took from it several pieces of hard bread which he had brought from Peco. A bit of this was crumbled into some water in a tin cup and stirred with his finger until it was thoroughly soaked and soft. This he took to the baby.

"Now, how am I goin' to feed him?" he wondered. "I s'pose babies gener'ly have spoons an' things for their housekeepin', an' of course I can't pour this stuff into that pin-point of a mouth without chokin' him. Let's see."

He reached down and cut a generous piece from the leg of one of his heavy boots. This he twisted into a cone, with one end very small, and fastened the overlapping edges with thorns. Then, awkwardly, he raised the baby upon his lap, poured the contents of the tin cup into the cone, and dropped the small end into the open mouth.

Perhaps the baby had an iron-clad stomach, perhaps he was very near to starving; possibly, for some unknown physiological reason, the food exactly agreed with him. At any rate, he ate it eagerly, to the last drop, and when the cone was empty he rubbed his hands together and crowed gleefully into the face of his grinning nurse, evidently taking the hideous contortions of the countenance above him for something arranged especially to amuse him. Timbrell forgot his own supper in watching, and when, after ten minutes of playing, the baby yawned and stretched sleepily and then snuggled its head in under his coat for a nap, he gave utterance to his favorite expression. "Well, I'll be damned!"

. . . . . .

The last affair at Peco called for a long retirement from public notice; but in less than three months a cattleman, whose ranch was near the hills, brought a note to the sheriff of Peco, which he had found fastened to the neck of one of his cattle, with a gold nugget for special delivery. The note read:

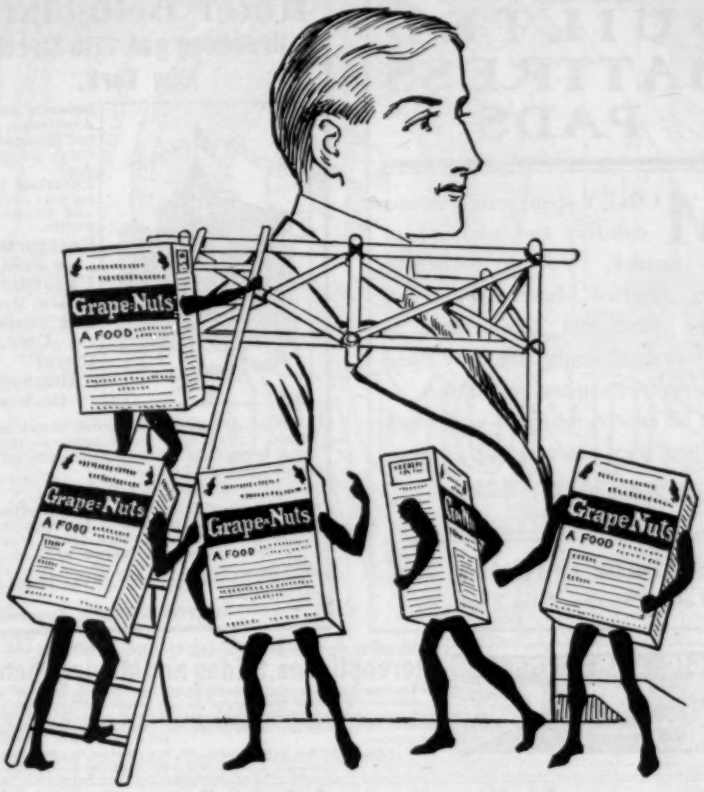
MR. SHERIFF:—Can't you an' me ante up an' strike a new deal? You couldn't catch me till hell freezes over, an' you know it; an' 'ceptin' you said so I couldn't go an' live near people in jest as long. Now, I've got a little skezooks here—baby, ye know—that'll beat anything that ever walked. But the hills ain't no place for babies, an' I want to take him where I can bring him up right. Can't ye see the bank people, an' all the others an' sort o' talk it over? The twenty thousand an' the papers I took from the bank are hid in the rocks here, an' they can have 'em all back full count; an' the jewelry ain't never been took from the bag I grabbed it in yet. Of course, I can't raise the dead to life, but you know most of 'em pumped lead into me, too. But I'll do everything I can, an' if you'll sort o' straighten things out I'll come back an' toe the mark square for the sake of the skezooks.

You can send your answer an' have it fastened to the big tree that lightnin' struck, close in by the hills. If it stays there several weeks I'll happen round sort o' casual an' read it. This is all iron-clad agreements.

TIMBRELL.

The sheriff of Peco read this note thoughtfully, and then took it to the bank and the jewelry store and some other places. The result of the conferences was a note which was sent and fastened to the big tree by a special messenger, and which Timbrell was examining almost before the messenger was out of sight.

An hour later Timbrell was on his way back, with his baby and the two horses.



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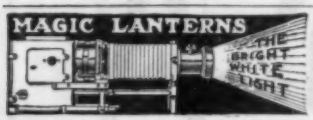

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